

Recommended Reading for the Professional Soldier

1. LTG "ACE" Collins' *Common Sense Training*
2. COL Dandridge (Mike) Malone's *Small Unit Leadership*
3. COL Roger Nye's *Challenge of Command*
4. COL (later LTG) Palmer's *Summons of the Trumpet*
5. Sun Tzu's *On War*
6. Xenophon's *Anabasis (The Expedition)*
7. Jean Larteguy's *The Centurions*
8. Guy Sajer's (Mouminoux) *The Forgotten Soldier*
9. Peter Paret and Gordon Craig's *Makers of Modern Strategy*
10. Charles MacDonald's *Company Commander*
11. Erwin Rommel's *Infanterie greift an (Infantry Attacks)**

Each of those books taught me strong lessons in individual and unit training, integrity and honor, leadership, professionalism, the human dimension of the profession of arms, military tactics and strategy, unit pride and bonding, and the history of the military art - lessons that have held my attention to this day - many for 40 years or more of being a 6 time commander as an Infantry officer, staff officer, combat veteran, and Joint/Acquisition Officer, as well as a Professor in two different Nations' military academies.

I could add probably 25 to 50 more books to the list that are all excellent leadership studies (like Eric Larrabee's *Commander in Chief: FDR and his Lieutenants*), history/biographies (like LTG Hal Moore's and Joe Galloway's *We Were Soldiers and We Were Young*, or *The Patton Papers*, Chandler's *Napoleon*, or Grant's *Memoirs*), Strategic Studies (like Von Clausewitz and B.H.Liddell Hart) and/or great military novels, like (Anton Meyers' *Once an Eagle*), but none of those additions made a singularly significant impact on my psyche or approach to my responsibilities as an Army officer and leader entrusted with the lives and development of soldiers.

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* Rommel's *Infantry Attacks* is a great first person account of his experiences and tactics used as a platoon leader (and acting battalion commander while still a lieutenant) during combat in the First World War – the first time that weapons so dominated warfare that large mobilized citizen-soldier armies were stalemated by artillery, land mines, and machine guns to the exclusion of maneuver. While many forgot the power of maneuver, surprise, and the audacity of attacking and exploiting successes to effect major victories on the battlefield, Lieutenant Rommel and his commanders proved that properly led and motivated soldiers in small units can consistently attack and defeat a larger enemy force by utilizing key terrain, innovative and aggressive offensive tactics, combining fire and maneuver, the element of surprise, and meticulous planning. Professionally trained in tactics, weapons, the Art of War, problem-solving and overcoming obstacles, Rommel with very few resources, accomplished or exceeded every objective and mission given to him, earning Germany's highest medal for valor, the Pour le Merite (Blue Max). While many see warfare of today as much different from that of the Great War, it is important to remember that conflict still requires one group to overcome another and that the principles of both leadership and war have not changed. The lessons here are many: decentralized leadership, the power of a commander exhibiting personal courage, leading from the front, making professional judgments and taking personal initiative to exploit the situation, which requires professional training and expertise, problem solving -

the thought process utilized by Rommel (and explained in his book). The mountainous terrain of the Austro-Italian Alps is not much different than that of Afghanistan. The mission of infantry soldiers is the same as it was in ancient times, to close with and defeat the enemy. The principles of leadership, particularly at the small unit level (where battles are won or lost) remain the same.